



Analysis of Factors Affecting the Job Satisfaction of Staff Nurses in a Tertiary Care Hospital, Kerala, India

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Abstract

The level of job satisfaction of staff nurses in a hospital is an important topic of global interest. There are various descriptive studies regarding this topic in public and private hospitals across the world, but there is very limited research on this subject from Kerala, India, a state with health care indices comparable to that of developed countries. The objectives of the study were to assess the level of Overall Job Satisfaction of the staff nurses working in the 300 bedded multispecialty tertiary care public hospital in Kerala and to analyse the factors affecting the job satisfaction and to investigate the relationship between the various socio-demographic variables and subscales of job satisfaction with the level of Overall Job Satisfaction. It was a cross sectional descriptive study. A sample of 50 Staff Nurses working in the 300 bedded multispecialty tertiary care public hospital in Kerala were selected using simple random sampling. The data was collected using a self administered structured Job Satisfaction Questionnaire. The Staff Nurses working in this hospital had an overall good level of satisfaction with their job, (mean 3.32, SD=0.25; possible score range 1-5). Among the subscales, Interpersonal Relationship (mean=4.42, SD=0.40) is rated as the highest satisfied domain. Nurses with higher qualification and using public transport are found to have lower levels of Overall Job Satisfaction (p=0.012). All the five subscales showed statistically significant prediction of Overall Job Satisfaction with p value <0.001. Our study showed a good level of job satisfaction among the staff nurses in a tertiary care public hospital in Kerala, India. The modifiable factors affecting Overall Job Satisfaction were good interpersonal relationships, good conveyance system to hospital and support from the employers. The influence of a good peer group relationship among nurses need to be highlighted which had a major contribution to Overall Job Satisfaction and it can even compensate the dissatisfaction level in other satisfaction components. Moreover to reduce the cost of recruiting and training new staff in the healthcare system, the management of hospitals are encouraged to develop strategic measures to enhance the level of staff nurses' job satisfaction.

Keywords: Job satisfaction, Tertiary Care Hospital, Staff Nurses, Kerala.

Introduction

Health professionals' level of job satisfaction is an important topic of research globally for a long period of time^[1]. The job satisfaction of health workers are important because it affects their performance in the job and their quality of life which will in turn influence the quality of the services provided by the hospital to the patients. It also affects the quality and the status of the hospital^{[1], [2]}. The main factors affecting the level of job satisfaction, as commonly mentioned in the literature, are increased work load and decreased support from the colleagues^[3]. Studies have also illustrated the role of organizational set up, career advancements, pay and autonomy as factors affecting the level of job satisfaction of the health care providers^{[4],[5]}. Every health care professional is an important part of the health care system, and the level of their job satisfaction is being recognised as a measure in quality improvement programmes. Low levels of satisfaction result in increased staff turnover and absenteeism, which invariably affects the efficiency of health care services.

Staff Nurses make up the largest population of the healthcare workforce and they have diverse roles, functions and responsibilities. They provide health and nursing care to the individuals, families, groups and communities. Their role is important in treatment and acute care of common illnesses, rehabilitation and long term care of patients with chronic illnesses and terminal illnesses. In addition to the patient care, a staff nurse plays active roles in leadership, planning, implementation of policies, specialised services and research.

Job satisfaction is the level to which the employees like or enjoy their job. It is referred as the individuals' general attitude and perceptions about their job^{[6],[7]}. The level of job satisfaction among staff nurses is one of the important issues in the recruitment and maintenance of nursing manpower in any health care institution. The level of job satisfaction of staff nurses is a crucial factor to understand the impact of continuing quality of patient care^[8].

There are many studies from India both from public and private hospitals regarding the association between the various socio-demographic characteristics with the overall level of job satisfaction. A study conducted among 178 staff nurses in tertiary care hospital in India revealed 77% nurses were satisfied with their job, 1.7% dissatisfied and 21.3% were uncertain. Nurses with diploma qualification were more satisfied than degree holders. Married personal had more job satisfaction^[9]. But the data regarding the relation of socio-demographic variables with subscales of job satisfaction and the prediction of overall level of job satisfaction is limited.

The researches regarding Job satisfaction of Staff Nurses from Kerala, India, the state with health indices comparable to that of developed countries, are only few. It is found from a study from Kerala, that the majority of the nurses working in private hospitals are moderately satisfied in their jobs and the independent variables, age, sex and experience have significant relationship with job satisfaction^[10]. The objectives of our study are to assess the level of Overall Job Satisfaction (OJS) of the staff nurses working in the 300 bedded multispecialty tertiary care public hospital in Kerala and to analyse the factors affecting the job satisfaction. We also investigate the relationship between the various socio-demographic variables including the mode of transport to the hospital as well as the influence of family and subscales of job satisfaction with the level of Overall Job Satisfaction.

Materials and Methods

A cross sectional descriptive study was conducted at a 300 bedded multispecialty tertiary care public hospital in Kerala. Fifty staff nurses were selected using simple random sampling. The study was approved by the Institutional Review Committee and written informed consent was obtained from all the participants. Data were collected using a self administered structured Job Satisfaction Questionnaire ensuring anonymity.

The instrument used in the study is a self administered structured Job Satisfaction Questionnaire

with 2 sections. The first section comprised of socio-demographic variables which included the age, gender, marital status and the number of children, qualification, experience and mode of transport to the hospital. The second section was a modified 25 item Job Satisfaction Questionnaire adopted from McCloskey/Mueller Satisfaction Scale (MMSS). The scale was designed by McCloskey and Mueller to assess the satisfaction of hospital staff nurses^[11]. Our modified scale has 25 items, which are further subdivided into 5 subscales including Organizational Setup (OS) - 2 items, Working Conditions (WC) - 7 items, Interpersonal relationship (IPR)- 5 items, Career, Pay and Benefits (CPB)- 7 items and Appreciation& Status (AS)- 4items. Participants responded to these 25 items on a 5 point Likert scale ranging from '1- strongly disagree' to '5- strongly agree'; higher the mean score, the higher the level of job satisfaction of each participants. The internal consistency of the subscales of the questionnaire was good with Cronhback's alpha coefficient of 0.77.

The IBM's Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) for Windows, version 16.0 was used to analyse the data. Descriptive statistics was used to summarise the socio-demographic variables, level of job satisfaction and subscales of the questionnaire. Independent t test and ANOVA were used to compare the socio-demographic variables with job satisfaction. Multiple linear regression analysis was done to assess the relation between the Overall Job Satisfaction and its subscales.

Results

Majority of the nurses were females (n=36, 72%). Seventy eight percentages of Nurses were below 40 years of age. Forty six percentages of nurses were having Bachelor Degree in Nursing and 54% were having Diploma in General nursing and Midwifery. Seventy eight percentages of nurses had an experience less than 10 years duration. The socio-demographic profile of Staff Nurses is summarized in Table 1.

Means and standard deviations of the Overall Job Satisfaction (OJS) and its subscales are summarized

in Table 2. The mean total score of the OJS was 3.32 (SD=0.25; possible score range 1-5) indicating a good level of overall job satisfaction in the nurses. Among the subscales, Interpersonal Relationship (IPR) (mean=4.42, SD=0.40) in the job satisfaction subscale, scored the highest whereas the Organizational Set up (OS) scored the lowest level (mean=1.93, SD=0.72).

For comparing the socio-demographic variables, OJS and its subscales, subgroup analyses using Independent t Test and ANOVA were done. There were significant differences in the mean scores of OJS ($t = -7.82, p < 0.0001$) and IPR ($t = -8.83, p < 0.0001$) between male and female staff nurses. The Bachelor degree holders were less satisfied with OJS, WC and IPR with p values 0.012, 0.006 and 0.034 respectively. As the age of staff nurses increase their level of Job Satisfaction in terms of CPB decreased significantly ($t = -2.93, p = 0.005$). The staff nurses with experience more than 10 years were significantly less satisfied with WC, CPB and AS with p values 0.018 and $p < 0.0001$. The staff nurses who were using own vehicle to the hospital were more satisfied than those who were using public transport in terms of OJS and WC (p values 0.012 and 0.006). The participants with 2 children were found to be more satisfied with OJS, IPR and CPB (ANOVA, $F=8.221, 6.411$ and 6.684 respectively, p values 0.001 and 0.003) compared with nurses with one child and having no children. The findings are displayed in Table 3.

A multiple regression Analysis was done to analyse the effect of various subscales of Job Satisfaction with Overall Job Satisfaction. The independent variables were OS, WC, IPR, CPB and AS with dependant variable as OJS. This helped to know the relative contribution of each aspects of Job Satisfaction with the overall Job Satisfaction level. All the five subscales showed statistically significant prediction of Overall Job Satisfaction with p value < 0.001 . Among the five subscales, Working conditions and Career, Pay& Benefits showed maximum prediction of Overall Job Satisfaction and is shown in Table 4.

Table 1: Socio-demographic profile of participants (N=50)

Characteristics	Categories	Frequency (%)
Age Group	Age : Mean=35.4, SD=7.1	
	<40 Years of age	39 (78%)
	>40 Years of age	11 (22%)
Gender	Males	14 (28%)
	Females	36 (72%)
Marital Status	Single	4 (8%)
	Married	45 (90%)
	Divorced	1 (2%)
Number of Children	No Child	13 (26%)
	1 Child	14 (28%)
	2 Children	23 (46%)
Qualification	Diploma in General Nursing	27 (54%)
	Bachelor Degree	23 (46%)
Experience	<10 Years	39 (78%)
	>10 Years	11 (22%)
Mode of Transportation	Own vehicle	26 (52%)
	Public Transport	24 (48%)

Table 2: Means and Standard Deviations of the Overall Job Satisfaction and Subscales (N=50)

Instruments	Mean	Standard Deviation
Overall Job Satisfaction (OJS)	3.32	0.25
Organizational Set Up (OS)	1.93	0.72
Working Conditions (WC)	2.93	0.27
Interpersonal Relationship (IPR)	4.42	0.40
Career, Pay & Benefits (CPB)	3.63	0.37
Appreciation & Status (AS)	2.80	0.45

Table 3: Comparison of the Job satisfaction and Socio-demographic profile of Participants (N=50)

Variables	n	OJS	OS	WC	IPR	CPB	AS
Age Group							
Age<40 Yrs	39	3.29(0.25)	1.91(0.78)	2.91(0.25)	4.39(0.40)	3.55(0.37)	2.83(0.44)
Age>40 yrs	11	3.43(0.23)	2.0(0.50)	3.02(0.34)	4.51(0.42)	3.90(0.23)	2.68(0.46)
t/df		-1.57/48	-0.36/48	-1.28/48	-0.87/48	-2.93/48	0.95/48
p value		0.12	0.72	0.21	0.39	0.005*	0.35
Gender							
Males	14	3.02(0.14)	1.04(0.13)	2.79(0.18)	3.91(0.23)	3.36(0.25)	2.73(0.41)
Females	36	3.44(0.18)	2.28(0.53)	2.99(0.28)	4.61(0.26)	3.73(0.36)	2.82(0.46)
t/df		-7.82/48	-8.66/48	-2.54/48	-8.83/48	-3.52/48	-0.619/48
p values		<0.0001*	0.001*	0.014*	<0.0001*	0.001*	0.539
Qualification							
Diploma	27	3.51(0.14)	2.20(0.58)	3.06(0.29)	4.61(0.34)	3.90(0.20)	2.86(0.49)
Degree	23	3.10(0.16)	1.61(0.75)	2.79(0.16)	4.19(0.35)	3.30(0.23)	2.72(0.39)
t/df		2.61/48	1.31/48	2.86/48	2.18/48	1.42/48	0.208/28
p values		0.012*	0.196	0.006*	0.034*	0.160	0.836
Experience							
<10YRS	39	3.30(0.26)	1.90(0.77)	2.89(0.20)	4.40(0.41)	3.56(0.37)	2.92(0.41)
>10YRS	11	3.39(0.23)	2.05(0.52)	3.10(0.42)	4.49(0.38)	3.86(0.30)	2.36(0.23)
t/df		-0.953/48	-0.593/48	-2.46/48	-0.697/48	-2.44/48	4.22/48
p values		0.345	0.553	0.018*	0.489	0.018*	<0.0001*
Mode of Transport							
Own	26	3.41(0.23)	2.06(0.75)	3.03(0.29)	4.53(0.37)	3.70(0.30)	2.81(0.44)
Public	24	3.23(0.24)	1.79(0.67)	2.83(0.20)	4.29(0.40)	3.55(0.43)	2.78(0.46)
t/df		2.61/48	1.31/48	2.86/48	2.182/48	1.428/48	0.208/48
p values		0.012*	0.196	0.006*	0.034*	0.160	0.836
No. of Children							
No Child	13	3.14(0.20)	1.62(0.68)	2.81(0.15)	4.18(0.33)	3.37(0.38)	2.75(0.31)
1 Child	14	3.29(0.26)	1.93(0.90)	2.89(0.20)	4.31(0.42)	3.58(0.39)	2.88(0.41)
2 Children	23	3.45(0.20)	2.11(0.58)	3.03(0.33)	4.61(0.34)	3.79(0.27)	2.77(0.53)
F/df		8.22/49	3.25/49	2.02/49	6.41/49	6.68/49	0.315/49
P values		0.001*	0.048	0.144	0.003*	0.003*	0.731

*Significant p values

Table 4: Multiple regression analysis of Overall Job Satisfaction with various subscales

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	p
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
Constant	-.026	.018		-1.425	.161
Organisational Setup(OS)	.075	.002	.216	38.287	.000
Working Conditions (WC)	.282	.005	.304	51.686	.000
Interpersonal Relationships (IPR)	.208	.004	.332	51.089	.000
Career, Pay & Benefits (CPB)	.279	.003	.414	80.455	.000
Appreciation and Status (AS)	.159	.003	.282	56.511	.000

Discussion

Our study which was conducted in a 300 bedded multispecialty tertiary care public hospital in Kerala showed good level of Overall Job Satisfaction (OJS) with mean 3.32 (SD=0.25; possible range 1-5). Globally similar studies from public and private hospitals showed variable results. The study of 80 staff nurses selected through random sampling from various private and government hospitals of Punjab, India demonstrated Nurses working in government hospitals were better satisfied with their job than the nurses working in private hospitals^[12]. Another research regarding the level of job satisfaction between government and private sector hospitals in Lucknow, India found more satisfaction in Government sector nurses^[13]. The study conducted among 178 staff nurses in tertiary care hospital in India revealed 77% nurses were satisfied with their job^[9]. In India, overall job satisfaction in public hospital nurses had been found to be better than their counterparts in private hospitals. This may be due to better and consistent salary packages in government sector. Among the studies done outside India, the nurses working in USA^[14], Australia^[15] and Ireland^[16] showed high level of satisfaction with mean well above 4 and a study from Hong Kong showed moderate level of OJS with mean job satisfaction score 3.81(SD=0.37;possible range 1-7) in a private hospital^[6]. To the contrary, the study done in the public hospital nurses in South Africa showed very low level of Job satisfaction^[17]. The higher level of OJS in western countries may be due to better working conditions, less patient-nurse ratio, higher autonomy and good inter

dependence among the various levels of health care workers.

The analysis of subscales of OJS in our study showed Interpersonal Relationships (IPR) and Career, Pay & Benefits (CPB) as the most satisfactory domains with mean score 4.42 and 3.63 respectively (range 1-5). IPR was the first one in the satisfaction level. In a study done by Cowen in Australia^[18], IPR was the domain with highest satisfaction score. A possible explanations for IPR becoming a major component of OJS in our hospital are good inter departmental relationships, less ego among doctors and nurses as they have to depend on nurses for monitoring of patients due to the lack of interns and regular community activities incorporated in the staff culture without affecting hospital work.

CPB was the second highest subcategory in the satisfaction components. Similar finding was seen in the study done in Hong Kong^[6] but in the western countries USA^[14], Australia^[15] and Ireland^[16] salary was ranked as the least satisfactory component in spite of higher gross salary packages. This may be because of higher daily living expenses, insurance deductions and higher taxation in these countries. More over the leave benefits, Child care benefits and family health care insurance coverage for children and even parents are more practically useful in their home countries.

In our study, the Organizational setup and Appreciation & Status were the domains with least satisfaction. It is worth to note that in the study in Hong Kong^[6] and in western countries^{[14], [15], [16]} professional status and Autonomy has been ranked as the most satisfactory subscale. A

possible explanation is delayed promotions to higher posts and lack of open friendly interactions with higher authorities and junior level staff. The domains of Status and Autonomy becomes important in retaining the employees in the hospital else their Intention to Quit levels increase as they gain years in experience. In a study done by Neuhaser^[19], it was shown that 59 % of OJS was determined by the relationships with nurses and their superior staff.

The association of job satisfaction with education levels had been evaluated in many studies showing positive relation, negative relation or sometimes neutral relation. In our study, Nurses with higher qualification and older age group indicated lower level of job satisfaction. In the study done by Lee^[4], older and less qualified nurses showed good satisfaction. The studies done by Blegan^[20] and Chan et al^[21] also showed similar findings. This may be due to the fact that degree holder nurses had higher expectations towards job and task requirements. But contrasting finding was seen in the study of public hospital nurses in South Africa in which sub professional nurses expressed significantly lower satisfaction levels^[17].

As one's age advances, the expectations for better working conditions will become a major factor in determining OJS. In our study, nurses with more than 10 years experience were significantly less satisfied with WC, CPB and AS, but in the cross sectional study among 1973 staff nurses found that the level of job satisfaction is not influenced by age, educational level and years of experience^[22].

In our study, the males were significantly less satisfied in job than females. This was also seen in all domains of job satisfaction. In the study done by Siu^[3] male nurses were less satisfied in their jobs than female nurses while Mc Gitton et al^[23] have shown lower levels of job satisfaction in female nurses. This gender differences may be due to higher stress and poor support from the colleagues.

A study conducted among 178 staff nurses in tertiary care hospital in India revealed married personal had more job satisfaction^[9] but our study has not shown any significant relation with the job satisfaction or its subscales with marital status and it may be due to good interpersonal relationship between the staff nurses who had participated in the study. This result cannot be generalizable as our sample size is small and only from a single hospital.

We have found a significant positive correlation between the OJS, IPR and CPB with staff nurses who are having two children but the study from Hong Kong^[6] could not elicit any significant relation between the number of children and job satisfaction and its subscales. This may be due to the fact that the employees in our institution is provided with Child Care Leave Benefits for 2 years for each children till they attain 18 years of age as well as Child Education Allowances for 2 children are given. The staff nurses avail these benefits and they become more committed to their job which increases their level of job satisfaction.

We have analysed the influence of mode of transport in OJS and it was found that OJS was significantly more in those using private vehicles. The satisfaction level in WC and IPR was also found to be more in them. Those using own vehicles get more flexibility and time in finishing job targets and also in improving peer relationships. We could not find any other similar study evaluating this aspect as per our available knowledge. This high lights the importance of improving the public transport facilities and vehicle pooling awareness in our area.

Multiple regression analysis was done among the 5 domains of job satisfaction and found that WC and CPB have got maximum influence in OJS and predictive capacities with IPR coming third. In the study done by Bacha AM et al in Brazil University Hospital, WC and IPR also got significant predictive capacities^[24]. But in the study done by Mateja et al in Slovenia, managerial competency of leaders have got maximum influence in OJS^[25].

Our study had several limitations. The study design was cross sectional design and we had used simple random sampling for sample selection which limits the generalizability of the study. The Intention to quit job, nurses' turnover rates and detailed job stress indicators are needed to be studied with a large sized sample in a longitudinal prospective design to get a better understanding. We have also used a self modified Job Satisfaction Questionnaire compatible to our practical settings.

Conclusion

Our study showed a good level of job satisfaction among the staff nurses in a tertiary care public hospital in Kerala, India. The modifiable factors affecting Overall Job Satisfaction were good Interpersonal Relationships, a cordial relationship between higher authorities and staff nurses, good conveyance system to hospital and family support from the employers in the form of eligible leaves and benefits. The influence of a good peer group relationship among nurses need to be highlighted which had a major contribution to Overall Job Satisfaction and it can even compensate the dissatisfaction level in other satisfaction components. Moreover to reduce the cost of recruiting and training new staff in the healthcare system, the management of hospitals are encouraged to develop strategic measures to enhance the level of staff nurses' job satisfaction. Future research on job satisfaction of staff nurses in diverse samples in public and private hospitals and community settings is necessary.

Contribution of Authors

The topic selection and methodology was done by the first author. Data collection was done by the fourth author. Evaluation of the Questionnaire, data analysis and interpretation was done by the first and second authors. Manuscript preparation was done by the first, second and third authors. The final manuscript was read and approved by all the authors.

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